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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 001918

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA

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SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT PUSHES BACK ON THE NIQAB

REF: A. CAIRO 202 B. CAIRO 945 Classified By: Economic-Political Minister-Counselor Donald A. Blome for reason 1.4(d)

1. Key points: -- (C) Leadership of both Islamic and secular educational institutions are increasingly critical of the niqab, a full facial ve
2. (C) Comment: As salafist ideas have spread in Egypt, there has been a marked increase in conservative Islamic dress, including the niqab (r
3. (SBU) In recent days, local and international media have focused on GoE efforts to restrict the niqab. The story apparently began on Octobe
4. (C) On October 5, Al Azhar public relations official Ahmed Tawfiq told us that Tantawi has no plans to issue a general ban on the niqab. Ir
5. (SBU) According to media reports, Cairo University, a large state-run university which began the school year on October 3, is prohibiting f
6. (C) Egypt's Ministry of Awqaf (Islamic Endowments), which supervises mosques and imams, continues a campaign launched in late 2008 to convi